AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government is supporting research and development on various herbal plants. Three National Gene Banks have been set up at Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute, Trivandrum, National Botanical Plant Genetic Resource Institute, New Delhi and Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP), Lucknow to conserve the germplasm of medicinal and aromatic plants which are threatened/rare/endangered and are extensively used in traditional system of medicine. Plants which are commercially important and where significant R&D leads have been obtained for future development of drugs have also been studied.

(c) Efforts are continuing for improvement of medicinal and aromatic plants through conventional breeding as well as with modern tools of biotechnology. To improve and structurally modify natural plant products for efficient biological activity and to refine and develop processing technology for industrially important secondary metabolotes, a number of research projects have been supported. Scientists at National Institute of Immunology (NII), New Delhi have isolated fractions with immunomodulatory properties from Pepper with anti-tumour properties. At CIMAP, Lucknow 250 mutants of Catharanthus roseus have been isolated. A new variety 'NIRMAL' has been developed. A hairy root bank of this and several other species has been established. Promising genotypes have been identified in Duboisia myoporoides which to tolerate heat stress and PH beyond 8.5. An elite genotype of Glycyrrhiza glabra, 'Mishree', has been released for commercial exploitation.

Reinstatement of Parmanu Vidyut Karmachari Unionists

676. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any memorandum dated the 2nd September, 1996 from Parmanu Vidyut Karmachari Union, Ravatbhata, Rajasthan;

(b) if so, whether the Union has requested for reinstatement of the dismissed Trade Union Activists who were dismissed as early as two decades ago;

(c) whether Government propose to review their cases in view of the fact that they were dismissed for Trade Union Activities; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) The Government do not propose to review the decision to dismiss these two employees as the Hon'ble Supreme Court has also upheld the same.

Restoration of Commuted Pension

677. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that commuted portion of the pension of Central Government employees is restored after 15 years, but in Punjab and Haryana the commuted portion is restored after 12 years;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the way inflation is rising, there is a need for restoration of the commuted pension after 10 years; and

(c) if so, whether Government would refer the matter to the Pay Commission to make suitable recommendations in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN): (a) to (c) in the case of Central Government Pensioners the commuted portion of pension is restored after 15 years. These orders were issued in 1987. Pensioners in Government are compensated against price rise by way of payment of dearness relief on pension at regular intervals. The matter relating to State Government pensioners is the concern of respective State Governments. In some States, the commuted portion of pension for State pensioners is restored before the period of 15 years. There is, at present, no proposal to reduce the number of years for the restoration of commuted pension. The terms of reference of the Fifth Central Pay Commission 'include' to examine, with a view to having a proper pension structure for pensions, the existing pension structure including Death Cum Retirement Benefits and make recommendations relating thereto which may be desireable and feasible. This would *inter alia* cover commutation of pension, and the matters related to the same.

DECF's Assistance for Tailpond Dam Power House Projects in Andhra Pradesh

678. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Andhra Pradesh Government has requested to recommend the projects relating to Tail Pond Dam Power House (down stream of Nagarjuna sagar) to the overseas economic cooperation fund (DECF) for assistance;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken for arranging external assistance for early implementation of the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) to (c) Andhra Pradesh State Electricity Board (APSEB) had requested Government of India to pose Nagarjuna Sagar Tail Pond Dam Power House hydroelectric scheme (2x25 MW) for external funding during the 9th Plan period. The project can be posed for external assistance only after the project receives clearance from Ministry of Environment & Forests and investment approval from Planning Commission.

Irregularities in distribution of Subsidised Motors Pumpsets in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa

679. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:
SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:

Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether several irregularities have been reported in the distribution of subsidised motor pumpsets, to the SCs and STs, under the Minor Irrigation Scheme, Comprehensive Rural Development Scheme, etc. in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa in 1995-96;

(b) if so, the norms followed by the district rural development authorities to identify the beneficiaries; and;

(c) the action proposed to be taken against erring officials who violated guidelines in this regard to helps bogus beneficiaries in those States?